

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

The Office Action acknowledges that U.S. Patent No. 4,577,675 to Ishihara et al. lacks the claimed disc members containing cordierite or an inorganic fiber and a binder. In the Request for Reconsideration filed January 31, 2008, a detailed discussion was provided concerning distinctions between the “cordierite” disclosed in Valle and the crystalline cordierite defined in claim 1. After further consideration, Applicant respectfully submits that Valle similarly lacks the claimed inorganic fiber and binder.

The Office Action contends that “Valle et al. includes mullite as inorganic fiber,” referring to page 5, lines 6-8 of Valle. In this context, however, generally, when one intends to mean “mullite fiber,” it is indicated with the term “fiber.” The “mullite” disclosed in Valle is not accompanied with the term “fiber,” and hence, it merely means a substance having a crystal form represented by $3\text{Al}_2\text{O}_3 \cdot 2\text{SiO}_2$. Similar to the relationship between the term “glass” and “glass fiber,” a mere mention of “mullite” does not necessarily mean “mullite fiber,” and it is appropriate to understand this word as not involving any meaning concerning its shape or representing powder or a molded article (of plate shape or something).

The Office Action further contends that Valle includes “clay as a binder,” referring to page 6, lines 7-8 and 13-21. Lines 7-8 on page 6, however, do not appear to include any disclosure about clay. In lines 13-21, what can be seen from the disclosure of this portion is that aluminas, clays, kaolins are used as raw materials to generate the target chemical compositions (i.e., the three compositions shown in Table 1 where mullite accounts for 70%, 50% and 30%, respectively, and balancing TiC) by heating. It cannot be seen at least from this disclosure that clay used here is intended or expected to serve as a binder.

In view of the foregoing remarks and the remarks in the Request for Reconsideration filed January 31, 2008, Applicant respectfully submits that the claims are patentable over the art of record and that the application is in condition for allowance. Should the Examiner believe that anything further is desirable in order to place the application in condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact Applicant's undersigned attorney at the telephone number listed below.

Prompt passage to issuance is earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

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